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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /070 W
---------- 105991
R 301057Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8623
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMCONSUL KARACHI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 0935

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN
SUBJ: KASHMIR: BHUTTO'S STRIKE CALL

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 836; B. ISLAMABAD 11616

SUMMARY: PM BHUTTO HAS CALLED ON PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN AND KASHMIRIS EVERYWHERE TO OBSERVE ONE-DAY STRIKE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY AGREEMENT BETWEEN MRS. GANDHI AND KASHMIRI LEADER SHEIKH ABDULLAH. PAKS HAVE REPEATEDLY DENOUNCED POSSIBLE AGREEMENT, AND STRIKE CALL IS ONLY MOST DRAMATIC GESTURE IN GOP EFFORT TO PERSUADE INTERNATIONAL OPINION AND REASSURE DOMESTIC PUBLIC THAT IT IS UNACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR PLEBISCITE AND DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY REAL SOLUTION TO THE KASHMIR PROBLEM. STRIKE CALL IS ALSO FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT GOP REMAINS UNREADY TO PREPARE PAKS FOR A FORMAL KASHMIR SETTLE-MENT WITH INDIA WHICH WOULD REFLECT OBJECTIVE REALITY, I.E., ACCEPTANCE OF THE LINE OF CONTROL AS INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY. TOUGH LINE ON KASHMIR REMAINS GOOD POLITICS IN PAKISTAN AND BHUTTO MAY ALSO SEE THIS DRAMATIC REASSERTION OF IT AS AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT
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IN COUNTERING ANY POPULAR MISGIVINGS PROMPTED BY PROGRESS

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MADE IN RECENT MONTHS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SIMLA ACCORD.
IN WAKE OF INDIRA-ABDULLAH AGREEMENT PAKS MAY SLOW DOWN
OR STOP FOR A WHILE FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION,
BUT ARE UNLIKELY TO UPSET WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.
BHUTTO WILL EXPECT HIS STRIKE CALL TO BE NOTICED
IN WASHINGTON AND TO PROMPT GREATER DISCUSSION OF THE
KASHMIR ISSUE DURING HIS U.S. VISIT THAN WOULD OTHERWISE
BE THE CASE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS HE HAD PROMISED EARLIER IN THE WEEK (REFTEL A),
PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO CHOSE GUJRAT, HEADQUARTERS TOWN
OF A PUNJAB DISTRICT WHICH BORDERS AZAD KASHMIR AND
HAS A LARGE KASHMIRI REFUGEE POPULATION, TO MAKE
"INTERESTING ANNOUNCEMENT" ON KASHMIR. THIS TURNED OUT
TO BE CALL TO THE PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN AND KASHMIRIS
EVERYWHERE TO OBSERVE A ONE-DAY PROTEST HARTAL
(STOPPING OF ALL PUBLIC ACTIVITY) ON THE FRIDAY
FOLLOWING THE DAY AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE OF A "DEAL"
BETWEEN INDIAN PM GANDHI AND KASHMIR LEADER SHEIKH
ABDULLAH.

2. IN HIS GUJRAT SPEECH, BHUTTO APPEALED FOR A SUCCESS-
FUL HARTAL SO THAT THE WORLD WOULD KNOW THAT THE
KASHMIR DISPUTE IS (ACCORDING TO THE PAK TIMES ACCOUNT)
"STILL ALIVE, VERY MUCH ALIVE AND THAT PAKISTAN HAS
NOT FORGOTTEN IT". HE RECALLED THAT HE HAD DISCLOSED
HIS INTENTION TO GIVE SUCH A CALL DURING HIS TOUR OF
AZAD KASHMIR IN NOVEMBER, 1973 AND NOTED THAT DISPITE
ALLEGED OPPOSITIONIST TAUNTS HAD HELD OFF UNTIL AN
APPROPRIATE MOMENT. HE ADDED THAT HARTAL SHOULD
BE OBSERVED EVEN IF THE INDIRA-ABDULLAH AGREEMENT WERE
MADE PUBLIC WHILE HE WAS AWAY VISITNG THE U.S. AND
ROMANIA. HE RENEWED CALL FOR SELF-DETERMINATION FOR
KASHMIR.

3. PAKS HAVE REPEATEDLY DENOUNCED LONG-EXPECTED (AND,
BY THEM, LONG-FEARED) INDIRA-ABDULLAH AGREEMENT AS
FRAUDULENT AND INVALID SELLOUT OF KASHMIRIS BY POWER-
HUNGRY SHEIKH. CALL FOR HARTEL IS ONLY MOST DRAMATIC
GESTURE IN CONTINUING GOP EFFORT TO PERSUADE INTERNATIONAL
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OPINION AND REASSURE DOMESTIC PUBLIC THAT AGREEMENT IS
UNACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR PLEBISCITE AND DOES NOT
REPRESENT ANY REAL SOLUTION TO THE KASHMIR PROBLEM.

4. STRIKE CALL IS ALSO FURTHER EVIDENCE, IF ANY IS
NEEDED, THAT GOP REMAINS UNREADY TO MAKE ANY EFFORT
TO PREPARE PAK PUBLIC FOR A FORMAL KASHMIR SETTLEMENT WITH
INDIA WHICH WOULD REFLECT OBJECTIVE REALITY, I.E.,

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ACCEPTANCE OF THE LINE OF CONTROL AS INTERNATIONAL
BOUNDARY (REFTEL B). TOUGH LINE ON KASHMIR REMAINS
GOOD POLITICS IN PAKISTAN, PARTICULARLY IN PUNJAB, AND
BHUTTO ANNOUNCEMENT WILL APPEAL AS DEMONSTRATION THAT
GOP IS STILL DOING SOMETHING TO KEEP POT SIMMERING.
HARTAL ITSELF WILL, OF COURSE, BE SUCCESSFUL IN PAKISTAN
AND AZAD KASHMIR -- GOP WILL SEE TO THAT -- ANY ANY
SHORTCOMINGS IN INDIAN KASHMIR WILL BE ATTRIBUTED HERE
TO PRESENCE OF "ARMY OF OCCUPATION", AS BHUTTO HAS
ALREADY BEEN CAREFUL TO SUGGEST IN HIS GUJRAT SPEECH.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 0935

5. BHUTTO MAY ALSO SEE DRAMATIC REASSERTION OF
TOUGH LINE ON KASHMIR AS AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN
COUNTERING ANY POPULAR MISGIVINGS PROMPTED BY THE PROGRESS
MADE IN RECENT MONTHS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SIMLA ACCORD.
WITH THE PRESS FILLED WITH REPEATED STORIES OF DELE-
GATIONS MOVING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN,
BHUTTO PROBABLY FEELS THAT GOOD POLITICS DEMANDS A
NEWSWORTHY PUBLIC REASSURANCE ON THE CORE PROBLEM
IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT IN HIS
KICKOFF SPEECH AT CAMPBELPUR ON
JANUARY 27 HE DEVOTED
CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO DEFENDING AGREEMENT TO RESUME

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INDO-PAK TRADE, AND IN GUJRAT HE REPORTEDLY
DECLARED THAT PAKISTAN WOULD CONTINUE TO STICK STEAD-
FASTLY TO ITS STAND ON KASHMIRI SELF-DETERMINATION NO
MATTER HOW GOOD ITS RELATIONS WITH INDIA.

6. IT IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT WHEN, AND IF, THE
INDIRA-ABDULLAH AGREEMENT DOES MATERIALIZE BHUTTO WILL
CONSIDER IT POLITICALLY FEASIBLE NOR ADVISABLE TO
CONFINE PAK REACTION TO A HARTAL, HOWEVER "SUCCESSFUL".
MFA HAS TOLD US IN THE PAST THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT
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WOULD INTRODUCE "TENSIONS" INTO INDO-PAK RELATIONS BUT
WOULD NOT LEAD TO THE SCRAPPING OF ANY OF THE PROGRESS
ALREADY MADE IN IMPLEMENTING SIMLA. WHAT SEEMS MOST
LIKELY IN THE WAKE OF AN AGREEMENT IS A DELIBERATE
SLOWING
DOWN OR STOPPING FOR A WHILE OF FURTHER PROGRESS
IN WHAT LITTLE REMAINS TO BE DONE (RESUMPTION OF CIVIL
AIR LINKS AND OVERFLIGHTS, FURTHER TRADE ARRANGEMENTS)
UNDER SIMLA'S PARAGRAPH THREE.

7. ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE HAZARDOUS TO MAKE ANY ASSESS-
MENT AS TO THE WEIGHT HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE U.S.
HAD ON BHUTTO'S DECISION TO MAKE HIS HARTAL CALL
AT THIS TIME, IT IS REASONABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT HE
WILL EXPECT IT TO BE NOTICED IN WASHINGTON AS A CLEAR
REITERATION OF LONG-STANDING PAK POSITIONS. HE PROBABLY
ALSO ANTICIPATED THAT IT WOULD PROMPT GREATER DIS-
CUSSION OF THE KASHMIR ISSUE IN HIS MEETINGS WITH THE
MANY POLITICAL LEADERS AND JOURNALISTS HE IS PLANNING
TO SEE THERE.
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